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ART. I.—*Life of George Washington.* By WASHINGTON IRVING. New York: G. P. Putnam & Co. 1856. 3 vols.

BIOGRAPHY is an art that demands a peculiar sense of the appropriate. Even the acknowledged exemplars of this species of writing do not yield precedents of universal application. Few men, of however rare colloquial powers, can bear so minute a record of their sayings and doings as renders Boswell's *Life of Johnson* one of the most attractive books in the English language. Where the hero, on the other hand, is a man of deeds rather than of words, the more simple, literal, and authentic the chronicle of his actions, the better; and, accordingly, scrupulous fidelity to this condition has made Southey's *Life of Nelson* a model of its kind. When the interest of the subject, however, is psychological, — a revelation of the conflicts, the aspirations, and the noble pleasures of one whose achievements bear no proportion to the daily beauty of his life and the inward resources of courage, love, and wisdom incarnated in the man himself, and chiefly exhibited to the eye and heart of friendship, — then we hail, with delight, the sympathetic intelligence and moral insight displayed by Carlyle in his *Life of Sterling*. There is, notwithstanding this diversity of merit, one test applicable to all memoirs, — their more or less vivid reflection of character.

Whatever plan is adopted, if the result is to impart a clear, definite, harmonious revelation of the subject,—if the saint or hero, the man or woman, becomes so distinct and palpable, that henceforth we know each feature and recognize the normal expression in all its individuality,—the object is gained, whether the process is the minute detail of consciousness like the French autobiographies, a critical analysis such as Dr. Johnson applied to the British poets, an egotistical narrative of personal and daily life such as Haydon left behind him, the generalized eulogy of one of Arago's academical discourses, the philosophical estimate of one of Lord Brougham's reviews, or the panoramic grouping of characters and scenes that gives life to the portraiture of Macaulay. In the instance before us, the elements of character were too evenly combined, and the balance of faculties too nicely adjusted, to admit of great metaphysical interest. The incidents are of a public rather than a personal nature; the virtues crave calm contemplation rather than dramatic exhibition. The man was a great moral unity, and not an erratic and marvellous genius; but, on the other hand, the scenes have an unparalleled significance, the character is the purest and the most effective in all history, and the events which brought out its latent meaning and force were of limitless and permanent influence.

When a new Life of Washington was announced as forthcoming from the graceful and endeared pen of Irving, we imagined that our literary pioneer was induced to give the ripe years of his honorable career to this labor of love, by the fortunate possession of fresh *memorabilia*, chiefly relating to the domestic and personal character of his great subject; and we enjoyed, in anticipation, a fund of new anecdotes and a series of genial pictures of home-life in the Old Dominion, with Washington as the central figure. This expectation was a natural inference from our author's previous writings, wherein the humorous and the picturesque alternate so agreeably with legend and sentiment. What we already possessed, also, in the shape of biography, suggested the need of a somewhat more detailed and elaborate portrait, one which might represent the man as well as the soldier and the statesman. Recalling the numerous traditional incidents of his early life

and the vivid glimpses of his later years, recorded by those who enjoyed the hospitalities of Mount Vernon, it was not difficult to conjure up a delightful sketch, like that which embalms a visit to Abbotsford and Newstead Abbey, and has made us so well acquainted with Roscoe and Bracebridge Hall. Local associations and amenities of private life are so native to Irving's genius, that we thus instinctively prefigured his *Life of Washington* as less didactic and political than Marshall's, less historical and official than that of Sparks, and more familiar and minute than either. These anticipations have been, in a measure, realized by the vividly narrated details of Washington's youthful days, the picture of colonial life in Virginia, the personal anecdotes occasionally introduced in the subsequent narrative, and, now and then, by a phrase of quiet humor or an expressive outbreak of sentiment; but, as a whole, the aim of Irving proves higher, more complete, and of a profounder intent, than our truant fancy prophesied. He dwells, indeed, with characteristic zest, upon a juvenile episode of the tender passion, and fondly exhibits the claims of ancestral distinction, and the nurture of those instincts which come only from gentle blood; he shows that, if his youthful hero is no classical scholar, his copy-books are models of neatness; he does not permit a single element of refinement and natural beauty which influenced the first development of the future leader to escape him; but it soon becomes apparent that literary display and mere entertainment are far beneath the scope of his self-imposed task. He curbs his imagination and simplifies his language, like a man conscious of working in the service of truth. Before the simple majesty of the life he describes, rhetoric shrinks. No metaphor is required to illustrate what is in itself luminous throughout. Words have no value here but to represent things as they are. The facts require no embellishment. The man needs only to be unveiled; to deck him out with eulogy would be impertinent; the biographer's office is to report faithfully, and truth itself becomes eloquence. His aim has been, therefore, in the quaint language of old Herbert, to "copy fair what Time hath blurred," and thus "redeem truth from his jaws."

Accordingly, it is in a thoroughly conscientious spirit that this work is written; a striking evidence of which is in the candid statement of the Tory intrigues in the author's native and beloved State at the commencement of the war. The art manifested is constructive, not rhetorical; and no one but a practised writer can estimate the difficulty of weaving into a consecutive and harmonious whole events so broken up by time and space, and interfused with such a variety of local and social agencies. With a calm and patient research and arrangement, a fluent and pure diction, a judicious inweaving of correspondence and contemporary testimony, the story of Washington's life is narrated without exaggeration or artifice. So unambitious is the style, so quiet the strain, that, to some readers, it may appear to want spirit, to lack sympathy with the heroic side of Washington's character, and to flow on in too tranquil and undramatic a vein. And yet this very calmness, this avoidance of rhetorical display and philosophic comment, this reliance on the facts of character for the interest and value of the work, is, in our view, the highest conceivable tribute to the unequalled grandeur of the subject, and the noblest compliment to the national heart. It shows perfect confidence in the power of the sublime lineaments which are reflected from the lucid page, and of the vital import of the events recorded, to win profound attention. Its value is characteristic, not adventitious; and to place such occurrences and a personage like this in the open light of truth has obviously been the single and heartfelt desire of the author. Herein he proves himself adequate to the grateful duty, which he has fulfilled in a manner that makes every true American his debtor. We do not mean to assert that the work is faultless. Errors have already been discovered, and, in some instances, corrected; we could point out an infelicitous expression, perhaps, here and there, and suggest cases of the superfluous working out of certain points to the neglect of others. But this ungracious task is needless; to render such a work perfectly correct and satisfactory, requires more than one edition, and there is no defect in its execution not easily susceptible of remedy. Meantime, it is to its design and general scope, to its merits as a whole, and in conception, that we

desire to bear our earnest testimony. So widely have the intense school of fiction, the epigrammatic and fanciful style of essays and lectures, and the melodramatic and speculative phase of historical writing, infected the public taste, that we do not expect the unpretending and latent merits of this biography to be at once and generally appreciated; but, eventually, its manly and consistent tone, and its singular accordance with its subject, in directness, fidelity, and adherence to clear, unadorned truth and fact, will be felt and acknowledged.

Avoiding alike disputed points of minor importance, irrelevant comment, and incidental gossip, our author deals almost exclusively with action. It is this that he constantly endeavors to depict, thus constructing a biography essentially popular, fitted to interest the young and old, the erudite and the ignorant, through the inevitable attraction and permanent value which belong to events as distinguished from speculation, and to life as the exponent of character. With this aim, the stateliness of formal history is sedulously repudiated, the story is encumbered by no irrelevant matter, and every page is crowded with incidents. Even with so concise a plan, the work has expanded under the author's pen; the three volumes are inadequate to embrace the Revolutionary epoch; and the administration and closing years of Washington may extend to two volumes more, especially as the last will naturally deal with those private details, which the rapid march of events excluded from the earlier portions of the work, which have gradually accumulated as successive contemporary memoirs have appeared, and to which every year has added since death has canonized his memory.

The memory of Washington is the highest and most precious of national blessings, and, as such, cannot be approached by artist or author without reverence. To pervert the traits or to mar the unity of such a character is to wrong, not only his sacred memory, but the dearest rights of his countrymen. We have no patience with those who, in the bravado of mediocrity, or the recklessness of mercenary authorship, have caricatured and vulgarized so lofty a theme; and we repeat, that, if anything could have enhanced our estimate of Washington Irving as an American writer, it is the true-hearted veneration,

the simple faith, the gracious candor, with which he has recorded the life of our matchless chief. There is a singular appropriateness in a literary task of so national a character being undertaken by our earliest author who achieved a European reputation, whose memory embraces the period when the living hero glorified our nascent republic, and whose name identifies him with the grateful renown that crowned the life and labors his pen commemorates.

When we say that he has written the biography of Washington in the spirit of its subject, we mean to express the highest praise of which such a task is susceptible. A poet of our country once conceived a drama based on the fate of André; and, after striving to embody Washington in the piece in a manner coincident with his own profound sense of his character, he found that the only way of effecting this without detriment to his ideal, was to keep that august presence off the stage, and to hint its vicinity by the reverent manner in which the name and views of Washington were treated by all the *dramatis personæ*. This instinct of dramatic propriety is a most striking proof of the native sacredness of the subject. The more fertile it may be to the poet and philosopher, the less right has the biographer to interfere with, overlay, or exaggerate its primitive truth, and the more grateful should we be when the authority of a favorite name in literature is thus nobly given to the lucid and conscientious statement of facts, in themselves and for themselves immeasurably precious.

“You have George, the Surveyor,” said Carlyle, in his quaint way, to an American, when talking of heroes. Never had that vocation greater significance. It drew the young Virginian unconsciously into the best education possible in a new country for a military life. He was thereby practised in topographical observation; inured to habits of keen local study; made familiar with the fatigue, exposure, and expedients incident to journeys on foot and horseback, through streams and thickets, over mountains and marshes; taught to accommodate himself to limited fare, strained muscles, the bivouac, the woods, the seasons, self-dependence, and effort. This discipline inevitably trained his perceptive faculties, and made

him the accurate judge he subsequently became of the capabilities of land, from its position, limits, and quality, for agricultural and warlike purposes. A love of field-sports, the chief amusement of the gentry in the Old Dominion, and the oversight of a plantation, were favorable to the same result. Life in the open air, skilful horsemanship, and the use of the rifle, promoted habits of manly activity. To a youth thus bred in the freedom and salubrity of a rural home, we are disposed to attribute, in no small degree, the noble development of Washington. How naturally frank courage is fostered by such influences, all history attests. The strongest ranks in the old Roman armies were levies drawn from the agricultural laborers; the names of Tell and Hofer breathe of the mountains; and the English yeomen decided the victory on the fields where their kings encountered the French in the early wars. Political economists ascribe the deterioration of modern nations in those qualities which insure fortitude and martial enterprise to the encroachments of town life; and the greatest cities of antiquity fell through the insidious luxury of commercial success. Nor are these general truths inapplicable to personal character. In crowded towns artifice prevails. In the struggle for the prizes of traffic, nobility of soul is apt to be lost in thrift. The best hours of the day, passed under roofs and in streets, bring not the requisite ministry to health, born of the fresh air. It enlarges the mind to gaze habitually upon the horizon unimpeded by marts and edifices. It keeps fresh the generous impulses to consort with hunters and gentlemen, instead of daily meeting "the hard-eyed lender and the pale lendee." In a word, the interest in crops and herds, in woodland and upland, the excitement of duck-shooting, the care of a rural domain, and the tastes, occupations, duties, and pleasures of an intelligent agriculturist, tend to conserve and expand what is best in human nature, which the spirit of trade and the competition of social pride are apt to dwarf and overlay. Auspicious, therefore, were the influences around the childhood and youth of Washington, inasmuch as they left his nature free, identified him with the least artificial of human pursuits, and nursed his physical while they left unperverted his moral energies. He became attached to the kind of life of which



Burke and Webster were so enamored, that they ever turned with alacrity from the cares of state to flocks and grain, planting and reaping, the morning hunt and the midsummer harvest. There would seem to be a remarkable affinity between the charm of occupations like these and the comprehensive and beneficent mission of the patriotic statesman. To draw near the heart of Nature, to become a proficient in the application of her laws, to be, as it were, her active coadjutor, has in it a manliness of aim and a refreshing contrast to the wearisome anxieties of political life and the sordid absorption of trade, which charm such noble minds, and afford their best resource at once for pastime and utility.

There were, too, in that thinly peopled region over which impends the Blue Ridge, beside the healthful freedom of nature, positive social elements at work. The aristocratic sentiment had a more emphatic recognition there than in any other of the English Cisatlantic colonies; the distinctions of landed property and of gentle blood were deeply felt; the responsibility of a high caste, and of personal authority and influence over a subject race, kept alive chivalric pride and loyalty; and with the duties of the agriculturist, the pleasures of the hunt and of the table, and the rites of an established and unlimited hospitality, was mingled in the thoughts and the conversation of the people that interest in political affairs whence arise public spirit and patriotic enthusiasm. Thus, while estates carelessly cultivated, the absence of many conveniences, the rarity of modern luxuries, the free and easy habits of men accustomed rather to oversee workers than to work themselves, the rough highways, the unsubstantial dwellings and sparse settlements, might not impress the casual observer as favorable to elegance and dignity, he soon discovered both among the families who boasted of a Cavalier ancestry and transmitted noble blood. The Virginia of Sir Walter Raleigh — a country where the most extravagant of his golden dreams were to be realized — had given place to a nursery of men, cultivators of the soil and rangers of the woods, where free, genial, and brave character found scope, and the name of the distant colony that graced Spenser's dedication of the Faerie Queene to his peerless sovereign, instead of being identified with a new El Dorado,

was to become a shrine of Humanity, as the birthplace and home of her noblest exemplar.

These advantages, however, Washington shared with many planters of the South and manorial residents of the North, and they were chiefly negative. A broader range of experience and more direct influences were indispensable to refine the manners and to test the abilities of one destined to lead men in war, and to organize the scattered and discordant elements of a young republic. This experience circumstances soon provided. His intimacy with Lord Fairfax, who in the wilds of Virginia emulated the courteous splendor of baronial life in England, the missions upon which he was sent by the Governor of the State, combining military, diplomatic, and surveying duties, and especially the acquaintance he gained with European tactics in the disastrous campaign of Braddock, — all united to prepare him for the exigencies of his future career; so that, in early manhood, with the athletic frame of a hunter and surveyor, the ruddy health of an enterprising agriculturist, the vigilant observation of a sportsman and border soldier, familiar alike with Indian ambush, the pathless forest, freshets and fevers, he had acquired the tact of authority, the self-possession that peril can alone teach, the dignified manners of a man of society, the firm bearing of a soldier, aptitude for affairs, and cheerfulness in privation. To the keen sense of honor, the earnest fidelity, the modesty of soul, and the strength of purpose which belonged to his nature, the life of the youth in his native home, the planter, the engineer, the ambassador, the representative, the gentleman, and the military leader had thus added a harmony and a scope, which already, to discriminating observers, indicated his future genius for public life and his competency to render the greatest national services.

During these first years of public duty and private enterprise, it is remarkable that no brilliant achievement served to encourage those latent military aspirations which lurked in his blood. Braddock scorned his advice; Governor Dinwiddie failed to recognize his superior judgment; and he reached Fort Duquesne only to find it abandoned by the enemy. To clear a swamp, lay out a road through the wil-

derness, guide to safety a band of fugitives, survey faithfully the Shenandoah valley, treat effectively with Indians, and cheer a famished garrison, were indeed services of eminent utility; but it was only indirectly that they were favorable to his renown and prophetic of his superiority. His apparently miraculous escapes from bullets, drowning, and the ravages of illness, called forth, indeed, the recognition of a providential care suggestive of future usefulness; but the perplexities growing out of ill-defined relations between crown and provincial officers, the want of discipline in troops, the lack of adequate provision for the exigencies of public service, reverses, defeats, physical and moral emergencies, thus early so tried the patience of Washington, by the long endurance of care, disappointment, and mortification, unredeemed by the glory which is wont to attend even such martyrdom, that he cheerfully sought retirement, and was lured again to the field only by the serious danger which threatened his neighbors, and the prompting of absolute duty. The retrospect of this era of his life derives significance and interest from subsequent events. We cannot look back, as he must often have done from the honorable retreat of his age, without recognizing the preparatory ordeal of his career in this youth and early manhood, wherein he experienced, alternately, the solace of domestic comfort and the deprivations of a border campaign, the tranquil respectability of private station and the responsibility of anxious office, the practice of the camp and the meditations of the council, the hunt with gentlemen and the fight with savages, the safe and happy hospitality of a refined circle and forest life in momentary expectation of an ambush. Through all these scenes, and in each situation, we see him preserving perfect self-control, loyal to every duty, as firm and cheerful during the bitter ordeal at Fort Necessity as when riding over his domain on a summer morning, or shooting game on the banks of the Potomac, ready to risk health, to abandon ease, to forego private interests, with a public spirit worthy of the greatest statesman, yet scrupulous, methodical, and considerate in every detail of affairs and position, whether as a host, a master, a guardian, a son, or a husband, as a member of a household or a legislator, as leader of a regiment or agent

of a survey ; and so highly appreciated was he for this signal fidelity within his then limited sphere, that his opinion in a social discussion, his brand on tobacco, his sign-manual to a chart, his report to a superior, and his word of advice or of censure to a dependent, bore, at once and for ever, the sterling currency and absolute meaning which character alone bestows. In this routine of duty and vicissitude under these varied circumstances, in the traits they elicited and the confidence they established, it is impossible not to behold a school often severe, yet adequately instructive, and a gradual influence upon the will, the habits, and the disposition of Washington, which laid the foundations, deep, broad, and firm, of his character, and confirmed the principles as well as the aptitudes of his nature.

So intimately associated in our minds is the career of Washington with lofty and unsullied renown, that it is difficult to recall him as divested of the confidence which his fame insured. We are apt to forget, that when he took command of the army his person was unfamiliar and his character inadequately tested to the public sense. Officers who shared his counsels, comrades in the French war, neighbors at Mount Vernon, the leading men of his native State, and a few statesmen who had carefully informed themselves of his antecedent life and private reputation, did indeed well appreciate his integrity, valor, and self-respect ; but to the majority who had enlisted in the imminent struggle, and the large number who cautiously watched its prospects before committing either their fortunes or their honor, the elected chief was a stranger ; nor had he that natural facility of adaptation or those conciliating manners which have made the fresh leader of troops an idol in a month, nor the diplomatic courtesy that wins political allies. If we may borrow a metaphor from natural philosophy, it was not by magnetism so much as by gravitation that his moral authority was established. There was nothing in him to dazzle, as in Napoleon, nothing to allure, as in Louis XIV., when they sought to inspire their armies with enthusiasm. The power of Washington as a guide, a chieftain, and a representative of his country, was based on a less dramatic and more permanent law ; he gained the influ-

ence so essential to success, — the ability to control others, — by virtue of a sublime self-government. It was, in the last analysis, because personal interest, selfish ambition, safety, comfort, — all that human instincts endear, — were cheerfully sacrificed, because passions naturally strong were kept in abeyance by an energetic will, because disinterestedness was demonstrated as a normal fact of character, that gradually, but surely, and by a law as inevitable as that which holds a planet to its orbit, public faith was irrevocably attached to him. But the process was slow, the delay hardly tolerable to a noble heart, the ordeal wearisome to a brave spirit. In our view, no period of his life is more affecting than the early months of his command, when his prudence was sneered at by the ambitious, his military capacity distrusted even by his most intimate friend, and his “masterly inactivity” misinterpreted by those who awaited his signal for action. The calm remonstrance, the inward grief, the exalted magnanimity, which his letters breathe at this crisis, reveal a heroism of soul not surpassed in any subsequent achievement. No man ever illustrated more nobly the profound truth of Milton’s sentiment, “They also serve who only stand and wait.” His was not simply the reticence of a soul eager for enterprise, the endurance of a forced passivity, with vast peril and glorious possibilities, the spur of necessity, the thirst for glory, and the readiness for sacrifice stirring every pulse and bracing every nerve; but it was his part to “stand and wait” in the midst of the gravest perplexities, in the face of an expectant multitude, with a knowledge of circumstances that justified the “hope delayed,” and without the sympathy which alleviates the restless pain of “hope deferred,” — to “stand and wait” before the half-averted eye of the loyal, the gibes of a powerful enemy, the insinuations of factious comrades, — with only conscious rectitude and trust in Heaven for support. How, in his official correspondence, did Washington hush the cry of a wounded spirit; how plaintively it half escapes in the letter of friendship; and how singly does he keep his gaze on the great cause, and dash aside the promptings of self-love, in the large cares and impersonal interests of a country, not yet sensible of its infinite need of him, and of its own injustice!

The difficulties which military leadership involves are, to a certain extent, similar in all cases, and inevitable. All great commanders have found the risks of battle often the least of their trials. Disaffection among the soldiers, inadequate food and equipment, lack of experience in the officers and of discipline in the troops, jealousy, treason, cowardice, opposing counsels, and other nameless dangers and perplexities, more or less complicate the solicitude of every brave and loyal general. But in the case of Washington, at the opening of the American war, these obstacles to success were increased by his own conscientiousness; and circumstances without a parallel in previous history added to the vicissitudes incident to all warfare the hazards of a new and vast political experiment. That his practical knowledge of military affairs was too limited for him to cope auspiciously with veteran officers, — that his camp was destitute of engineers, his men of sufficient clothing and ammunition, — that the majority of them were honest but inexperienced yeomen, — that Tory spies and lukewarm adherents were thickly interspersed among them, — that zeal for liberty was, for the most part, a spasmodic motive, not yet firmly coexistent with national sentiment, — that he was obliged, month after month, to keep these incongruous and discontented materials together, inactive, mistrustful, and vaguely apprehensive, — all this constitutes a crisis like that through which many have passed; but the immense extent of the country in behalf of which this intrepid leader drew his sword, the diversity of occupations and character which it was indispensable to reconcile with the order and discipline of an army, the habits of absolute independence which marked the American colonists of every rank, the freedom of opinion, the local jealousies, the brief period of enlistment, the obligation, ridiculed by foreign officers but profoundly respected by Washington, to refer and defer to Congress in every emergency, — this loose and undefined power over others in the field, this dependence for authority on a distant assembly, for aid on a local legislature, and for co-operation on patriotic feeling alone, so thwarted the aims, perplexed the action, and neutralized the personal efficiency of Washington, that a man less impressed with the greatness of the object in view, less sustained by solemn ear-

nestness of purpose and trust in God, would have abandoned in despair the post of duty, so isolated, ungracious, desperate, and forlorn.

Imagine how, in his pauses from active oversight, his few and casual hours of repose and solitude, the full consciousness of his position — of the facts of the moment, so clear to his practical eye — must have weighed upon his soul. The man in whose professional skill he could best rely during the first months of the war, he knew to be inspired by the reckless ambition of the adventurer, rather than the wise ardor of the patriot. Among the Eastern citizens the spirit of trade, with its conservative policy and evasive action, quenched the glow of public spirit. Where one merchant, like Hancock, risked his all for the good cause, and committed himself with a bold and emphatic signature to the bond, and one trader, like Knox, closed his shop and journeyed in the depth of winter to a far distant fort, to bring, through incredible obstacles, ammunition and cannon to the American camp, hundreds passively guarded their hoards, and awaited cautiously the tide of affairs. While Washington anxiously watched the enemy's ships in the harbor of Boston, his ear no less anxiously listened for tidings from Canada and the South. To-day, the cowardice of the militia; to-morrow, the death of the gallant Montgomery; now the capture of Lee, and again a foul calumny; at one moment a threat of resignation from Schuyler, and at another an Indian alliance of Sir Guy Johnson; the cruelty of his adversaries to a prisoner; the delay of Congress to pass an order for supplies or relief; desertions, insubordination, famine; a trading Yankee's stratagem or a New York Tory's intrigue; the insulting bugle-note which proclaimed his fugitives a hunted pack, and the more bitter whisper of distrust in his capacity or impatience at his quiescence; — these, and such as these, were the discouragements which thickened around his gloomy path, and shrouded the dawn of the Revolution in dismay. He was thus, by the force of circumstances, a pioneer; he was obliged to create precedents, and has been justly commended as the master of "a higher art than making war, the art to control and direct it," and as a proficient in those victories of "peace no less renowned than

war," which, as Fisher Ames declared, "changed mankind's ideas of political greatness."

What, we are continually impelled to ask, were the grounds of hope, the resources of trust and patience, which, at such crises, and more especially during the early discouragements of the struggle, buoyed up and sustained that heroic equanimity, which excited the wonder, and finally won the confidence, of the people? First of all, a settled conviction of the justice of his cause and the favor of God; then a belief, not carelessly adopted, that, if he avoided as long as possible a general action, by well-arranged defences and retreats, opportunities would occur when the enemy could be taken at disadvantage, and by judicious surprises gradually worn out and vanquished. Proof was not wanting of a true patriotic enthusiasm, — unorganized, indeed, and impulsive, yet real, and capable, by the *prestige* of success or the magnetism of example, of being aroused and consolidated into invincible vigor. Scattered among the lukewarm and the inexperienced friends of the cause were a few magnanimous and self-devoted men, pledged irretrievably to its support, and ready to sacrifice life, and all that makes life dear, in its behalf. Greene and Putnam, Knox and Schuyler, Robert Morris and Alexander Hamilton, were names of good cheer, and reliable watchwords in the field and the council; Franklin and Adams were representatives of national sentiment rarely equalled in wisdom and intrepidity; the legislative body whence his authority was derived more and more strengthened his hands and recognized his ability; the undisciplined New-Englanders hollowed a trench and heaped a mound with marvellous celerity and good-will; bush-fighters from the South handled the rifle with unequalled skill; a remarkable inactivity on the part of the enemy indicated their ignorance of the real condition of the American army; and last, though not least, experience soon proved that, however superior in a pitched battle, the regular troops were no match for militia in retrieving defeat and disaster. The marvellous siege of Boston, the masterly retreat from Brooklyn Heights, the success at Sullivan's Island, and the capture of the Hessians at Trenton, made it apparent that vigilant sagacity and well-timed bravery are no inadequate



compensation for the lack of material resources and a disciplined force.

Everything combines, in the events and the character so candidly portrayed in these volumes, to deepen moral interest and extinguish dramatic effect. In the absence of "the pomp and circumstance" of war, and the latent meaning and grand results involved, the chronicle differs from all other military and civil annals. The "lucky blows" and "levies of husbandmen," the poorly clad and grotesquely armed patriots, were as deficient in brilliancy of tactics and picturesque scenes, as was the bearing and aspect of their leader in the dashing and showy attractions of soldiership. "His eyes have no fire," says the Hessian's letter. An adept in the school of Frederic could find scarcely a trace of the perfect drill and astute combinations which were, in his view, the only guaranties of success in battle. The arrogant confidence of Marlborough, the inspired manœuvres of Napoleon, ordered with the rapidity of intuition beside a camp-fire and between pinches of snuff, the theatrical charge of Murat, the cool bravery of William of Orange, — all that is effective and romantic in our associations with military heroism gives place in this record to the most stern and least illusive realities. The actors are men temporarily drawn from their ordinary pursuits by a patriotic enthusiasm which displays itself in a very matter-of-fact way. The only sublimity that attends them is derived from the great interest at stake, and the deliberate self-devotion exhibited. Patience far beyond action, caution rather than enterprise, faith more than emulation, are the virtues demanded. What of poetry lies hidden in the possibilities of achievement is solemn rather than chivalric; endurance is the test, perseverance the grand requisite, indomitable spirit the one thing needful; and in these conditions, the restless, ambitious, and mercenary, who form the staple of armies, can find little scope or encouragement. It is neither the land nor the era for laurel crowns and classic odes, for orders and patents of nobility. If the volunteer falls, his only consolation is that he fills a patriot's grave, while some rude ballad may commemorate the victim, and the next Thanksgiving sermon of the pastor of his native hamlet may attest his worth. If

he survives, a grant of land, where land is almost worthless, and an approving resolution of Congress, are the only prizes in store for him, — save that greatest of all, the consciousness of having faithfully served his country.

The *tableaux* of Washington's life, however inadequately represented as yet in art, are too familiar to afford room for novel delineation to his biographer; and they differ from the prominent and dramatic events in other lives of warriors and statesmen in a latent significance and a prophetic interest that appeal to the heart more than to the eye. When we see the pyramids looming in the background of Vernet's canvas, the imagination is kindled by the association of Napoleon's victories with the mystical and far-away Egyptian land; but the idea of a successful hero, in the usual meaning of the term, of a distant campaign, of the spread of dominion, is dwarfed before the more sublime idea of a nation's birth, a vindication of inalienable human rights, a consistent assertion of civil freedom and the overthrow of tyranny, suggested by the successive portraits so dear to the American heart; — first, the surveyor guiding his fragile raft over the turbulent Alleghany; then the intrepid *aide-de-camp*, rallying the fugitive army of Braddock; next the dignified commander, drawing the sword of freedom under the majestic shadow of the Cambridge elm; the baffled but undismayed leader, erect in the boat which shivers amid the floating ice of the Delaware, his calm eye fired with a bold and sagacious purpose; cheering his famished and ragged men in the wintry desolation of Valley Forge; then receiving the final surrender of the enemies of his country; in triumphal progress through a redeemed and rejoicing land; taking the oath as first President of the Republic; breathing his farewell blessings and monitions to his countrymen; dispensing, in peaceful retirement, the hospitalities of Mount Vernon; and at last followed to the tomb with the tearful benedictions of humanity! It is the absolute meaning, the wide scope, the glorious issue, and not the mere pictorial effect, that absorbs the mind intent on these historical pictures. They foreshadow and retrace a limitless perspective, fraught with the welfare, not only of our country, but of our race. In comparison with them, more daz-

zling and gorgeous illustrations of the life of nations are as evanescent in effect as the *mirage* that paints its dissolving views on the horizon, or as a pyrotechnic glare beside the stars of the firmament.

As we ponder this record, its method and luminous order excite a new conviction of the wonderful adaptation of the man to the exigency; and it is one of the great merits of the work, that this impressive truth is more distinctly revealed by its pages than ever before. Not a trait of character but has especial reference to some emergency. The very faults of manner, as crude observers designate them, contribute to the influence, and thereby to the success, of the commander-in-chief. A man of sterner ambition would have risked all on some desperate encounter; a man of less self-respect would have perilled his authority, where military discipline was so imperfect, in attempts at conciliation; a man of less solid and more speculative mind would have compromised his prospects by inconsiderate arrangements; one less disinterested would have abandoned the cause from wounded self-love, and one less firm, from impatience and dismay; one whose life and motives could not bear the strictest scrutiny would soon have forfeited confidence; and moral consistency and elevation could alone have fused the discordant elements and concentrated the divided spirit of the people. Above all, the felicitous balance of qualities, through a moderation almost superhuman and never before so essential to the welfare of a cause, stamped the man for the mission. Not more obviously was the character of Moses adapted to the office of primeval lawgiver for the chosen people, not more clearly do the endowments of Dante signalize him as the poet ordained to bridge with undying song the chasm which separates the Middle Age from modern civilization, than the mind, the manner, the disposition, the physical and spiritual gifts, and the principles of Washington, proclaimed him the heaven-appointed chief, magistrate, man of America. In the very calmness and good sense, the practical tone and moderate views, which make him such a contrast to the world's heroes, do we behold the evidence of this. What does he proclaim as the reward of victory? "The opportunity to become a respect-

able nation." Upon what is based his expectation of success? "I believe, or at least I hope, that there is public virtue enough left among us, to deny ourselves everything but the bare necessities of life to accomplish this end." What are his private resources? "As I have found no better guide hitherto than upright intentions and close investigations, I shall adhere to those maxims while I keep the watch." This moderation has been fitly called *persuasive*, and this well-regulated mind justly declared "born for command." His reserve, too, was essential in such an anomalous condition of social affairs. Self-respect is the keystone of the arch of character; and it kept his character before the army and the people, his brother officers and his secret foes, the country and the enemy, firm, lofty, unassailable, free, authoritative,—like a planet, a mountain, a rock, one of the immutable facts of nature,—a Pharos to guide, a sublimity to awe, and an object of unsullied beauty to win by the force of spontaneous attraction. It is his distinction, among national leaders, as has been well said by our foremost ethical writer, to have been "the centre of an enlightened people's confidence." The nature of the feeling he inspired among the troops may be inferred from the expression in a letter from the camp at White Plains preserved in a gazette of the times: "Everything looks very favorable, — a fine army of at least twenty thousand men in remarkably good health and spirits, *consummate wisdom, centred in a Washington*, to direct them, and *a determined spirit with the whole body* to die or carry our purpose into effect." His relation was obviously representative; he incarnated the highest existent patriotism. His wisdom, not his genius, is thus recognized as the grand qualification. His own remark concerning Hamilton is singularly applicable to himself, — "his judgment was intuitively great," — and this was the intellectual endowment which justified to the good sense of the people the confidence which his integrity confirmed.

Another secret cause of this remarkable personal influence was self-restraint. There is no law of nature more subtile and profound than that whereby latent power is generated. The silent weight of the distant lake sends up the lofty jet of the fountain; and the clouds are fed by innumerable particles of

aeriform moisture. The electric force generated amid the balmy quietude of the summer noon, the avalanche slowly conglomerated from the downy snow-flakes, the universal process of vegetation, the vast equilibrium of gravity, the irresistible encroachment of the tide, and all broad and grand effects in the universe, are the reverse of violent, ostentatious, and fitful. By gradual development, harmonized activity, regular and progressive transitions, are enacted the most comprehensive functions of the physical world. A similar law obtains in character. The most expressive phrases in literature are the least rhetorical; the noblest acts in history are performed with the least mystery; true greatness is unconscious; "life," says the wise German, "begins with renunciation"; silence is often more significant than speech; the eye of affection utters more with a glance than the most eloquent tongue; passion, curbed, becomes a motive force of incalculable energy; and feeling, subdued, penetrates the soul with a calm authority and the manner with an irresistible magnetism. Our instinct divines what is thus kept in abeyance by will with a profounder insight than the most emphatic exhibition could bring home through the senses. The true artist is conscious of this principle, and ever strives to hint to the imagination rather than to display before the eye. The poet, aware by intuition of this law, gives the clew, the composer the key-note, the philosopher the germinal idea, rather than a full and palpable exposition. In the moral world latent agencies are the most vital. If Washington had been the cold, impassive man which those whom he treated objectively declared him to be, he could not have exercised the personal influence which, both in degree and in kind, has never been paralleled by merely human qualities. It was not to the correct and faithful yet insensible hero that men thus gave their veneration, but to one whose heart was as large and tender as his mind was sagacious and his will firm; the study of whose life it was to control emotion; to whom reserve was the habit inspired by a sublime prudence; whose career was one of action, and over whose conscience brooded an ever-present sense of responsibility to God and man, to his country and his race, which encircled his anxious brow with the halo of a prophet

rather than the laurel of a victor. He who knelt in tears by the death-bed of his step-daughter, who wrung his hands in anguish to behold the vain sacrifice of his soldiers, who threw his hat on the ground in mortification at their cowardly retreat, whose face was mantled with blushes when he attempted to reply to a vote of thanks, whose lips quivered when obliged to say farewell to his companions in arms, who embraced a brother officer in the transports of victory and trembled with indignation when he rallied the troops of a faithless subaltern, — he could have preserved outward calmness only by inward conflict, and only by the self-imposed restraint of passion have exercised the authority of principle. When the cares of public duty were over, and the claims of official dignity satisfied, the affability of Washington was as conspicuous as his self-respect, his common sense and humane sentiments as obvious as his modesty and his heroism. The visitors at Mount Vernon, many of whom have recorded their impressions, included a singular variety of characters, from the courtier of Versailles to the farmer of New England, from the English officer to the Italian artist; and it is remarkable, that, various as are the terms in which they describe the illustrious host, a perfect identity in the portrait is obvious. They all correspond with the description of Chief Justice Marshall:—

“His exterior created in the beholder the idea of strength, united with manly gracefulness. His person and whole deportment exhibited an unaffected and indescribable dignity, mingled with haughtiness, of which all who approached him were sensible; and the attachment of those who possessed his friendship and enjoyed his intimacy was ardent, but always respectful. His temper was humane, benevolent, and conciliatory; but there was a quickness in his sensibility to anything apparently offensive, which experience had taught him to correct.”

An illustration of the last-named trait is afforded in an incident related by the late Gouverneur Morris, who was distinguished by an uncommon share of Washington's confidence and affection:—

“At a convivial party to which Washington was invited, his remarkable traits were the subject of earnest discussion among the company; and it was insisted that no one, however intimate, would dare to take a liberty with him. In a foolish moment of elation, Gouverneur Morris

accepted a bet that he would try the experiment. Accordingly, just before dinner was announced, as the guests stood in a group by the fire, he induced a somewhat lively chat, and in the midst of it, apparently from a casual impulse, clapped Washington familiarly on the shoulder. The latter turned, and gave him a look of such mild and dignified yet grieved surprise, that even the self-possession of his friend deserted him. He shrank from that gaze of astonishment at his forgetfulness of respect, and the mirth of the company was instantly awed into silence."

It is curious, with this anecdote fresh in the mind, to revert to the eulogy delivered by Morris after the death of Washington: "You have all felt the reverence he inspired; it was such that to command seemed in him but the exercise of an ordinary function, while others felt that a duty to obey (anterior to the injunctions of civil ordinance or the compulsion of a military code) was imposed by the high behests of nature."

To a reflective mind, there is something pathetic in the gravity so often noticed as a defect in Washington. It foreshadowed, in his youth, the great work before him, and it testified, in his manhood, to his deep sense of its obligations. It betokened that earnestness of purpose wherein alone rested the certainty of eventual success. It was the solemnity of thought and of conscience, and assured the people that, aware of being the central point of their faith, the expositor of their noblest and best desires, the high-priest of national duty, it was not with the complacency of a proud, or the excitement of a vain, but with the awe of a thoroughly wise and honest man, that he felt the mighty trust and the perilous distinction. Let it never be forgotten that it was his task to establish a grand precedent, untried, unheralded, unforeseen in the world. Such experiments, in all spheres of labor and of study, lead the most vivacious men to think. In science, in art, and in philosophy they breed pale and serious votaries. Such an ordeal chastened the ardent temper of Luther, knit the brow of Michel Angelo with furrows, and unnerved the frame of the starry Galileo. It is but a pledge of reality, of self-devotion, of intrepid will, therefore, that, with a long and arduous struggle for national life to guide and inspire, and the foundations of a new constitutional republic to lay, the chief and

the statesman should cease even to smile, and grow pensive and stern in the face of so vast an enterprise, and under the weight of such measureless responsibilities.

The world has yet to understand the intellectual efficiency derived from moral qualities, — how the candor of an honest and the clearness of an unperverted mind attain results beyond the reach of mere intelligence and adroitness, — how conscious integrity gives both insight and directness to mental operations, and elevation above the plane of selfish motives affords a more comprehensive, and therefore a more reliable view of affairs, than the keenest examination based exclusively on personal ability. It becomes apparent, when illustrated by a life and its results, that the cunning of a Talleyrand, the military genius of a Napoleon, the fascinating qualities of a Fox, and other similar endowments of statesmen and soldiers, are essentially limited and temporary in their influence; whereas a good average intellect, sublimated by self-forgetting intrepidity, allies itself for ever to the central and permanent interests of humanity. The mind of Washington was eminently practical; his perceptive faculties were strongly developed; the sense of beauty and the power of expression, those endowments so large in the scholar and the poet, were the least active in his nature; but the observant powers whereby space is measured at a glance, and physical qualities noted correctly, — the reflective instincts through which just ideas of facts and circumstances are realized, — the sentiment of order which regulates the most chaotic elements of duty and work, thus securing despatch and precision, — the openness to right impressions characteristic of an intellect, over which the visionary tendencies of imagination cast no delusion, and whose chief affinity is for absolute truth, — these noble and efficient qualities eminently distinguished his mental organization, and were exhibited as its normal traits from childhood to age. To them we refer his prescience in regard to the agricultural promise of wild tracts, the future growth of localities, the improvement of estates, the facilities of communication, the adaptation of soils, and other branches of economics. By means of them he read character with extraordinary success. They led him to methodize his life and labors, to



plan with wisdom and execute with judgment, to use the most appropriate terms in conversation and writing, to keep the most exact accounts, to seek useful information from every source, to weigh prudently and decide firmly, to measure his words and manner with singular adaptation to the company and the occasion, to keep tranquil within his own brain perplexities, doubts, projects, anxieties, cares, and hopes enough to bewilder the most capacious intellect and to sink the boldest heart. His mental features beam through his correspondence. We say this advisedly, notwithstanding the formal and apparently cold tenor of many of his letters; for so grand is the sincerity of purpose, so magnanimous the spirit, so patient, reverent, and devoted the sentiment underlying these brief and unadorned epistles, whether of business or courtesy, that a moral glow interfuses their plain and direct language, often noble enough to awaken a thrill of admiration, together with a latent pathos that starts tears in the reader of true sensibility. The unconsciousness of self, the consideration for others, the moderation in success, the calmness in disaster, the grand singleness of purpose, the heroic self-reliance, the immaculate patriotism, the sense of God and humanity, the wise, fearless, truthful soul that is thus revealed, in self-possessed energy in the midst of the heaviest responsibilities that ever pressed on mortal heart, with the highest earthly good in view, and the most complicated obstacles around, serene, baffled, yet never overcome, and never oblivious of self-respect or neglectful of the minutest details of official and personal duty, — is manifest to our consciousness as we read, and we seem to behold the benign and dignified countenance of the writer through the transparent medium of his unpretending letters. Compare, as illustrations of character the authenticity of which is beyond dispute, the correspondence of Washington and that between Napoleon and his brother Joseph, recently published at Paris. All the romance of spurious memoirs, all the dazzling *prestige* of military genius, fails to obviate the impression the Emperor's own pen conveys, in the honest utterance of fraternal correspondence, of his obtuse egotism, arrogant self-will, and heartless ambition. In Washington's letters, whether expostulating, in the

name of our common humanity, with Gage, striving to reconcile Schuyler to the mortifications of a service he threatened to quit in disgust, freely describing his own trials to Reed, pleading with Congress for supplies, directing the management of his estate from amid the gloomy cares of the camp, acknowledging a gift from some foreign nobleman, or a copy of verses from poor Phillis Wheatley, the same perspicuity and propriety, wisdom and kindliness, self-respect and remembrance of every personal obligation, are obvious.

The eloquent biographer of Goethe has aptly compared the agency of strong passions to the torrents which leave ribs of granite to mark their impetuous course, and significantly adds: "There are no whirlpools in shallows." How much nobler the sustaining and concentrative result of these turbulent elements becomes when they are governed and guided by will and conscience, the character of Washington singularly illustrates; and "passion when in a state of solemn and omnipotent vehemence, always appears to be calmness." These considerations enable us to reconcile what is apparently incongruous in the reports of different observers who have attempted to describe Washington's manner, aspect, and disposition. Thus we are told by one of his intimate companions, that he was "more free and open in his behavior at levee than in private, and in the company of ladies than when solely with men"; and by another, that "hard, important, and laborious service had given a kind of austerity to his countenance and reserve to his manner, yet he was the kindest of husbands, the most humane of masters, the steadiest of friends." One speaks of his large hand, the token of practical efficiency; one, of his personal attention to an invited guest; one, of his sagacious observations, in travelling, upon the facilities for internal communication or agriculture, suggested by the face of the country; and another, of his avoidance of personal subjects in conversation. But, in our view, some of the most striking tributes to the gradual but absolute recognition of his character are to be found in the contemporary public journals. Thus a London paper of February, 1784, says: "His circular letter to the army was read at a coffee-house not very distant from the Royal Exchange; every hearer was full of the writer's

praises; in composition it was said to be equal to anything of ancient or modern date." Subsequently, another popular English journal holds this language: "Whenever the shock of accident shall have so far operated on the policy of America as to have systematized and settled her government, it is obvious that the dictator, protector, stadtholder, or by whatever name the chief magistrate so appointed shall be called, will be General Washington." His retirement established the purity of his motives; and a Dublin print, dated the same year with our first extract, said:—

"There are few so blinded by prejudice, as to deny such a degree of merit to the American general as to place him in a very distinguished point of view; but even those who have been accustomed to view him as the most illustrious character of this or any other age, will be astonished by the following instance of his integrity, which we give from the most unquestionable authority. When General Washington accepted the command of the American army, he rejected all pecuniary reward or pay whatever, and only stipulated for the reimbursement of such sums as he might expend in the public service. Accordingly, at the conclusion of the war, he gave in to Congress the whole of his seven years' expenditure, which only amounted to £ 16,000 Pennsylvania currency, or £ 10,000 sterling. In the eyes of our modern British generals, the above circumstance will appear totally incredible; at least, they will deem Mr. Washington little better than a fool; for, if we judge from certain accounts, £ 10,000 would scarcely have answered the demands of a commander-in-chief at New York a single month."

These items, taken at random from the newspapers of his day, serve to make us understand how the man whose cautious generalship provoked the ridicule of Lord Howe's soldiers at the opening of the war, and whose firmness in resisting the French alliance awoke a storm of detraction from the Jeffersonian democracy, at a later period lived down aspersion, and became, by the evidence of facts, the acknowledged exemplar of human worth and wisdom described by his last and best biographer.

His moral serenity, keeping reflection intact and forethought vigilant, is nobly manifest in the deliberate process through which, by gradual and therefore earnest conviction, he came to a decision when the difficulties between the mother country and her colonies were pending. Not one of the leading patriots

of the Revolution ranged himself under its banner with more conscientious and rational motives. The same disposition is evident in his hesitation to accept the command, from that self-distrust which invariably marks a great and therefore modest soul, in his subsequent calmness in defeat and sobriety in victory, in the unexaggerated view he took of the means and his disinterested view of the ends of the momentous struggle, in the humility of spirit with which he assumed the reins of government when called to do so by the popular suffrage, in his uniform deference to the authority of all representative assemblies, in the prescient warnings of his parting address, in the unostentatious and simple habits that followed him into retirement, and in the unfaltering trust which gave dignity to his last hour. This normal characteristic of his nature, this being ever "nobler than his mood," is what pre-eminently distinguishes him from the galaxy of patriots, statesmen, and warriors whose names are blazoned in history; for the copious rhetoric of modern republicans, the fiery and yet often compromised pride of Paoli, the selfish instincts of Marlborough, the heartless ambition of Napoleon, were never long concealed, even from the eye kindled with admiration at their prowess. Washington seems not for a moment to have forgotten his responsibility to God and his fellow-creatures; and this deep sentiment permeated his whole nature,—proof against all excitement, illusion, and circumstance. When he overheard a little boy exclaim, as the procession in his honor passed through the streets, "Why, father, General Washington is only a man!" the illustrious guest paused in his triumphal march, looked with thoughtful interest on the child, and, patting him on the head, replied, "That's all, my little fellow, that's all." He was, indeed, one of the few heroes who never forgot his humanity, its relations, obligations, dependence, and destiny; and herein was at once his safeguard and his glory.

These facts of character were viewed by distant and illustrious men in relation to their own experience; yet diverse as may be the inference of each, a like feeling of admiration, and a testimony equally sincere and emphatic, signalize every tribute to the unparalleled and inestimable worth of

Washington in the annals of humanity. The popular statesman, who had become familiar with the deadly aspersions of party hatred, wondered that so many inimical eyes intent upon a career exposed to the keenest personal criticism failed to discover and fix one stain upon the reputation of the man, the statesman, or the soldier. This "excites astonishment," said Fox. The splendid advocate, who knew how the spell of official dignity was broken to the vision of those near the sceptre and the ermine, recorded, as an isolated fact in his knowledge of mankind, that Washington alone inspired him with the unmodified sentiment of veneration. "For you only," writes Erskine, "do I feel an awful reverence." The incident of his career which impressed the most renowned soldier of the age was characteristic at once of the limited scope and the enthusiasm of military genius. The bold and successful passage of the Delaware, and the surprise of the Hessians, awakened in Frederic of Prussia the sympathy and high appreciation which he manifested by the gift of a sword, with an inscription exclusively in praise of Washington's generalship. The moderation of his nature, the heroic balance of soul, whereby elation was kept in abeyance in the hour of success, not less nobly than despair in the day of misfortune, attracted the French philosopher, habituated as he was in the history of his own nation to the association of warlike and civic fame with the extremes of zeal and indifference, of violence and caprice. In his estimation, the good sense and moral consistency of Washington and his compatriots naturally offered the most remarkable problem. Accordingly, Guizot bears witness chiefly to this unprecedented union of comprehensive designs and prudential habits, of aspiration and patience, in the character of Washington, and, doubtless through the contrast with the restless ambition which marks the lives of his own illustrious countrymen, is mainly struck with the fact, that, while "capable of rising to the level of the highest destiny, he might have lived in ignorance of his real power without suffering from it." The Italian patriot, obliged to vent his love of country in terse dramatic colloquies and through the lips of dead heroes, is thrilled with the grand possibilities of action, through the realization of his sentiments by

achievement, opened to Washington. "*Felice voi*," exclaims Alfieri, in his dedication of *Bruto Secondo* to the republican chief, — "*felice voi che alla tanta gloria avete potuto dare basi sublime ed eterna, — l'amor della patria dimostrate coi fatti.*" Even the poor Indians, so often cajoled out of their rights as to be thoroughly incredulous of good faith among the pale-faces, made him an exception to their rooted distrust. "The white men are bad," said an aboriginal chief in his council speech, "and cannot dwell in the region of the Great Spirit, *except Washington.*" And Lord Brougham, in a series of analytical biographies of the renowned men of the last and present century, which indicate a deep study and philosophical estimate of human greatness, closes his sketch of Washington by the emphatic assertion, that the test of the progress of mankind will be their appreciation of his character.

Is not the absence of brilliant mental qualities one of the chief benefactions to man of Washington's example? He conspicuously illustrated a truth in the philosophy of life, often appreciated in the domestic circle and the intimacies of private society, but rarely in history, — the genius of character, the absolute efficiency of the will and the sentiments independently of extraordinary intellectual gifts. Not that these were not superior also in the man; but it was through their alliance with moral energy, and not by virtue of any transcendent and intrinsic force in themselves, that he was great. It requires no analytical insight to distinguish between the traits which insured success and renown to Washington, and those whereby Alexander, Cæsar, and Napoleon achieved their triumphs; and it is precisely because the popular heart so clearly and universally beholds in the American hero the simple majesty of truth, the power of moral consistency, the beauty and grandeur of disinterestedness and magnanimity, that his name and fame are inexpressibly dear to humanity. Never before nor since has it been so memorably demonstrated, that unselfish devotion and patient self-respect are the great reconciling principles of civic as well as of social and domestic life; that they are the nucleus around which all the elements of national integrity, however scattered and perverted, inevitably crystallize; that men thus

severely true to themselves and duty become, not dazzling meteors to lure armies to victory, nor triumphant leaders to dazzle and win mankind to the superstitious abrogation of their rights, but oracles of public faith, representatives of what is highest in our common nature, and therefore an authority which it is noble and ennobling to recognize. The appellative so heartily, and by common instinct, bestowed upon Washington, is a striking proof of this, and gives a deep significance to the beautiful idea, that "Providence left him childless, that his country might call him — Father."

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ART. II. — *Five Years in Damascus. Including an Account of the History, Topography, and Antiquities of that City; with Travels and Researches in Palmyra, Lebanon, and the Hauran.* By Rev. J. L. PORTER, A. M., F. R. S. L. In Two Volumes, with Maps and Illustrations. London: John Murray. 1855. 12mo. pp. 395, 372.

AN attractive and a comprehensive title! At last our desire shall be satisfied, and we shall have, from one who knows whereof he speaks, a veracious account of the ancient, romantic, and mystic city. In these delicious volumes, between these fascinating orange-colored covers, we shall doubtless find the condensed experience of five most wonderful years. The longest stay of ordinary tourists in Damascus hardly reaches to five days. Most persons succeed in "doing" all the sights and cramming the note-book in the course of forty-eight hours. In that brief space, they get curious and novel impressions enough to last them for a lifetime. But in the short narratives of these hasty tourists, there is, both to writer and reader, an uncomfortable sense of probable inaccuracy. Fact and fable come too close together in that Oriental region to enable one easily to separate them. Poetry blends with history, not only in the daily tales of the *cafés*, but in the blossoms of the gardens, the flow of the rivers, and the stones of the wall. One needs to have lived long enough in Damascus for the enchantment to wear itself away, before he can be sure